



Childhood Connections

March 3, 2023

## Spotlight on Professionals

Spotlight on Professionals aims to share stories from those working in childhood programs. This includes all professionals such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. These stories are also available on the [Early Connections website](#).



Photo Credit: Bowling Green R -1 School District

This month, the spotlight is on child care staff members at the Bowling Green R-I School District.

The district in northeast Missouri is in its second year of offering a child care program for staff in their district.

The district assessed the needs of their community and collaborated with other child care stakeholders to determine this approach was a win-win for both the community and the district. This child care center serves children from birth to age 3, at which time the children transition to the district's preschool program until age 5. The child care program has grown from 6 children the first year to 30 children in the second year.

In addition to working to increase teacher salaries locally, creating this child care option for teachers was a key workforce recruitment and retention tool for the district. Superintendent Dr. Matt Frederickson said in the last three years teacher attrition rates in the school district have decreased from 11 percent to under 4 percent.

Teachers pay tuition at a rate equivalent to the average cost of the local providers. Additionally, the district's child care program is a place for high school students participating in A+ and Child Development classes to gain extra experience with opportunities for service hours.

### REMINDER! Stakeholder Survey

We want to hear from you! As an important stakeholder in Missouri Early Care and Education system, your feedback helps guide the state's actions. Your feedback assists in evaluating the outcomes of the Preschool Development B-5 grant,



**NEW! Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) Meeting**

as well as progress on DESE's strategic plan for Missouri's childhood system.

This five-minute survey asks questions about the early care and education system in Missouri. Please complete the survey by March 17, 2023.



#### NEW! Child Care Relief Applications are Open

We are pleased to announce there are several new relief grants available to providers who are contracted with the DESE child care subsidy program or licensed with all health and safety training.

- Paycheck Protection grants support provider operations. [Apply here!](#) Application closes April 30, 2023.
- Retention for Child Care Staff grants support child care staff members. [Apply here!](#) Application closes April 30, 2023.
- Sustain Subsidy Operation grants support provider operations (must be contracted with the DESE child care subsidy program to receive these funds). [Apply here!](#) Application closes May 31, 2023.

#### REMINDER! Professional Development Opportunity for Subsidy Providers

OOC and its partner, University of Missouri-Kansas City, are excited to announce a new leadership and business management training program, the [Missouri Supporting Early Childhood Administrators \(MO-SECA\)](#).

- This program provides training, tools, coaching, and program assessment to help child care administrators effectively lead and manage their business operations.

The next meeting of the ECSAC will be on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, at 12:30 p.m. Read more about the council responsibilities on the [ECSAC webpage](#).

#### FINAL REMINDER! Applications Due

Start-up and Expansion grants are closing on March 31, 2023, for eligible schools who want to start a new program or expand an existing one. Public and private higher education institutions can apply [here](#). Public school districts and charter schools can apply [here](#). Questions? Contact [preschool@dese.mo.gov](mailto:preschool@dese.mo.gov) or call 573-751-6793.

#### REMINDER! Child Care Relief Resources

Do you have any questions about your child care relief funds application?

Customer service representatives are available to help. For additional information, please reach out to a representative at 573-415-8951, extension 1.

#### NEW! Developmental Screening Webinar

View our new webinar, [Understanding Developmental Screening](#). Developmental screenings can be used to celebrate reaching milestones, monitor child

- **Who is eligible to sign-up?** This professional development opportunity is open to child care administrators in programs that are licensed **and** contracted with the DESE child care subsidy program, including child care centers, child care group homes, and licensed family child care.
- **Need help with registration?** You can email [contactmoseca@gmail.com](mailto:contactmoseca@gmail.com) or call 314-558-6966. Registration is open throughout 2023 with multiple options for training dates.

## APPLICATIONS OPEN! Join the First Steps Provider Workgroup

OOC recently announced an opportunity for First Steps providers to join a stakeholder group to collaborate with the state on guidance, policies, and practices that impact early intervention providers. A message with the application and other information on how to apply was sent to First Steps providers via the WebSPOE data system.

Applications are due to the Early Intervention section by 5:00 p.m. on March 31. If you have any questions, contact the [Early Intervention team](#).

## UPDATE! Child Care Data System

OOC has contracted with two experienced vendors to provide Missouri with a new Child Care Subsidy Data System later this year.

This new system will give families and providers access to a mobile-friendly secure portal where they can apply for child care subsidy, renew their contract or benefit, make changes, see near real-time status of their application, upload supporting documents, see rate and payment information, and communicate directly with OOC staff with questions/comments.

We are working on a stakeholder engagement plan to connect with families, child care providers, and other stakeholders to ensure that this solution reflects the need of families and providers in Missouri. Watch for more information on this project throughout 2023.

## UPDATE! Easily Find Parent Education Programs

development, and identify possible delays or concerns. Visit Early Connections for information about developmental screening for [families](#) and [early childhood professionals](#).

## NEW! Reimaging Child Care

We are excited to share a few accomplishments from the task force charged with reimaging child care. This group was formed in January 2022 and has been working to identify and reduce barriers and propose new ideas and solutions to the state. Check out this [2022 flyer](#) to read more about these accomplishments.

## COMING SOON! Missouri Professional Development System

A new Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) system for early childhood programs is coming Summer 2023. This system will replace the current separate systems for OPEN Initiative's Toolbox, the Missouri Workshop Calendar, and DESE's online courses.

In May, we will offer webinar trainings to demonstrate the system.

To learn more about the new system, check out the [MOPD webpage](#).

To learn more about what parent education programs are in your area, visit the Global Program Locator found on the [Early Connections website](#). The Global Program Locator will help you find a program that assists families, pregnant teens, or primary caregivers who are expecting a child or have a child under the age of kindergarten entry. The programs promote early learning, knowledge, and understanding of child development.

These programs partner with community resources and help support school readiness by promoting a smooth transition into preschool and kindergarten. Families can participate in regularly scheduled family personal visits, group connections, and developmental screenings.

#### **REMINDER! Ensure You and Your Staff Are Following All Conditions of an Approved Variance**

##### **License & License-Exempt Providers:**

If your facility operates with one or more variances to a rule, you must keep a record of that approval accessible at your facility. Variance rational allows a facility to request not to follow the specifics of a rule while still meeting the intent of the rule by ensuring the health and safety of children.

This often comes with additional conditions for the facility to follow. Make sure all staff at your facility know what your variance is for and what additional conditions are required. Contact your Compliance Inspector if you have questions.

#### **NEW! Innovation Grants for Child Care and Business/Community Partners**

There are three new funding opportunities for businesses and community partners who want to help increase access to child care in their local community. Check out [this flyer](#) with information about all three grants: Innovation Start-up, Innovation Expansion, and Workforce Innovation for Child Care Staff.

#### **FREE RESOURCE! Help Pregnant Women Quit Tobacco**

The Office on Women's Health (OWH) at the Department of Health and Senior Services is happy to announce a free program to help pregnant women quit tobacco use! The OWH is partnering with The BABY & ME – Tobacco Free Program™ to provide telehealth cessation counseling sessions and cessation incentives at no cost.

To learn more, or if you have questions, please contact [Ashlie Otto](#).

#### **RESOURCE! Directory for People with Disabilities**

The Governor's Council on Disability promotes inclusion of the nearly one million Missourians with disabilities in all aspects of community life.

The Council publishes an [online resource directory](#) and informational brochures on topics relating to people with disabilities. The resource directory lists programs and services of state and local offices, private agencies, and other organizations serving people with disabilities.

#### **Spotlight on Success**

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.



Photo Credit: Kimberly Weakley

Over three days in December 2022, the community leaders in area 22 partnered with the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), Educare, local health departments, Bright Horizons, the local school district, and a community business to offer child care training for 16 early childhood professionals. DHSS coordinated the training, the local school district provided a location to host the training, and the community business sponsored breakfast and lunch for training participants. At the end of the three days, all 16 participants were ready to work in a child care facility.

Through the collaboration of seven organizations, the community leaders were able to help support the community and child care providers. Kimberly Weakley says, "This is bigger than one person or organization. To be successful, it takes all of us working to support the families and children of our earliest learners. This is just one example of how we are truly better together. The future looks bright for our Missouri children and families."

#### UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant

The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early



childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month the Office of Childhood hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. [A recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the March webinar is available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [February 2023](#)
- [January 2023](#)
- [November 2022](#)
- [October 2022](#)
- [September 2022](#)
- [August 2022](#)

A [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

### PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on March 28, 2023, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

### Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

Visit the Office of Childhood website to find [previous editions](#) of the Childhood Connections.

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